

Knox Regional Communications Center Executive Board

Wednesday
January 16, 2019
4:00 p.m.

A meeting of the Executive Board of the Knox Regional Communications Center took place on **Wednesday, January 16, 2019 at 4:00 p.m.** in the Knox County Emergency Management Agency Office.

Executive Board members in attendance: Knox County EMA Director Ray Sisk; Camden Fire Chief Chris Farley; Craig Cooley, Rockport Police Department; Jesse Thompson, Union EMS; Adam Miceli, Rockland Fire/EMS; and Ruston Barnard, Rockland Fire/EMS. **Members absent:** *Rockland PD Chief Chris Young.*

Others in attendance: Administrative Assistant Candice Richards; Knox Regional Communications Director Linwood Lothrop; Acting Deputy Communications Director Wally Tower; Commissioner Dorothy Meriwether; Chief Deputy Patrick Polky; Sheriff Tim Carroll; and Knox County Administrator Andrew Hart.

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| I. | 4:00 | Meeting Called To Order |
| II. | 4:01 | Action Items: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Approval of Board Minutes of October 24, 20182. Appointment of Officers:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Chair• Vice Chair• Secretary |
| III. | 4:05 | Discussion Items: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Update on Department Staffing |
| IV. | | Other Business |
| V. | | Adjourn |

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chair Chris Farley at 4:03 p.m. He asked everyone to introduce themselves since there was a new elected official present.

II. Action Items

1. Approval of Minutes of October 24, 2018.

- Craig Cooley motioned to approve the minutes. Jesse Thompson seconded the motion. A vote was taken with all in favor.

2. Voting in of Officers for 2019.

Current Chair Chris Farley called for nominations for Chair, Vice-Chair, and Secretary for 2019.

- Adam Miceli made a motion to keep the same officers for 2019 as were in 2018: Chris Farley as Chair, Craig Cooley as Vice Chair, and Candice Richards as Recording Secretary. Craig Cooley seconded the motion. A vote was taken with 4 in favor (Adam Miceli, Rusty Barnard, Ray Sisk, and Jesse Thompson) and 2 abstentions (Craig Cooley and Chris Farley).

III. Discussion Items

1. Update on Department Staffing.

The second of the three newest people hired has decided to resign because he didn't meet the performance standards. It's in large part due to a lack of life experience and he's been told he's welcome to apply again later in the future. This leaves 4 position vacancies in the Center. The others that left did so because they wanted to pursue their "dream jobs" and had the opportunity come up. No one could blame them for leaving.

Wally and Linwood both had concerns about the Emergency Police Dispatch protocols that the state wants to implement, for several reasons:

- The KRCC doesn't have enough of staff on duty at a time to do it.
- It's yet another unfunded mandate.
- We'd be required to put up walls and barriers in the center.
- The majority of our call volume is law enforcement-related, so implementation of EPD would have a huge impact.
- PSAP's aren't even finished implementing the fire protocols – it's just too soon to be trying to implement police protocols.
- Dispatchers would be held accountable to the State of Maine if they even remotely deviate from the script. They could technically lose their job.
- Not allowing dispatchers to go off script for law enforcement calls won't work - a lot of calls change their nature as they play out. You need to be able to deal with those added elements and changes as they pop up. With EPD you can't do that.
- The more work piled on dispatchers, and the more they are expected to memorize and learn, the harder it will be to find people willing to work under those conditions for the amount of money they make. Dispatchers already have a lot of training; this will just lengthen and complicate that whole process.

The legislature will be having work sessions on the proposed legislation and agencies be able to go have input at those.

There was some discussion about talking to the legislative delegates for Knox County and ask for their support. It was decided that a letter should be written to the County's delegation explaining the Executive Board's position on the subject. Chief Farley asked Jesse Thompson to draft a letter and get it to Linwood by a week from today. Linwood will get some info to Jesse to help him with writing it, and will also get information to Chief Farley on who it should go to.

It was noted that the County is doing everything it can to get the word out that the County is hiring but pretty much all public safety agencies in the state are having the same exact problem – it's hard to find people who want to do this type of job. There was some debate about whether raising the pay would make any difference. Efforts to improve morale by doing "extra" for the dispatchers was discussed. The morale has improved a lot and the culture in the Center is changing. The four vacancies are not because the employees hated it here and left; they left because they had other opportunities that they wanted to do.

It was decided to schedule a work session to come up with a list of things that the Board CAN do instead of talking about everything that doesn't work, or that hasn't worked in the past. Candice will be contacting everyone to get that scheduled.

IV. Other BusinessDeputy Communications Director Position

Sheriff Tim Carroll explained the process the Sheriff's Office had gone through to select a patrol administrator. Wally Tower was the ultimate choice but Wally has been helping in Dispatch and Tim wanted Wally to keep doing that while still providing expertise in Patrol. Wally is very passionate about the work he has been doing in the dispatch center but Sheriff Carroll said that he also needs Wally's help in patrol. The other four applicants need more time to get to the level of experience and knowledge that is needed for being a patrol administrator. Linwood commented that he didn't want to lose the momentum of the gains that have been made in the past year. Wally is only overseeing personnel in the dispatch center which has been vital to the agency.

There was some concern that if Wally is split between departments – dispatch, patrol, and airport security - it may look like the County doesn't actually need the deputy director position to be full time, which was something that the County fought hard for during the budget process. The Sheriff's Office is still trying to figure out how Wally's time will be allotted, and in what capacity. The County is still looking for others with Wally's expertise to be hired to do some of these functions so Wally isn't the only one. Wally being in dispatch was only meant to be temporary.

V. Adjourn

- Craig Cooley motioned to adjourn. Ray Sisk seconded the motion. A vote was taken with all in favor.

Meeting adjourned at 6:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Candice Richards
Administrative Assistant